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ABSTRACT

A guide to enhancing classroom communication with limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in sheltered English includes ideas for planning and presenting lessons. It gives suggestions for the use of gestures, language style, length of sentence, presentation of the main concept and supporting details, essential vocabulary, the organization of written materials, and approaches to student evaluation. The largest portion of the guide is devoted to an explanation and outline of the sentence patterns, verb forms, structure words, and endings used in instructional material development at one institution specializing in instruction of LEP students. (MSE)

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Guidelines
for
Writing Content Area Materials and Communicating Orally
with
Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students in Sheltered English

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Introduction

It is often difficult to instruct people whose English proficiency is limited (LEP). However, effective instruction and appropriate written materials can be provided if teachers follow certain guidelines and are willing to

- . confer with content area teachers to identify basic concepts and vocabulary peculiar to the subject,
- . simplify their English, and
- . use ESL strategies and techniques to instruct and evaluate students' progress.

The following strategies and techniques will help you plan and present lessons to LEP students.

Gestures

Use physical gestures to demonstrate the idea you are trying to convey. However, don't make gestures without a purpose.

Learn to interpret the gestures of your students. For example, a nod of the head does not necessarily indicate comprehension on the part of the student. Watch for possible signs of misunderstanding, frustration, or lack of communication.

Manner of Speaking

When speaking, make every sentence as short as possible. Use two short, simple sentences rather than one long, complex one. Note the following examples:

Complex: You must make a complete stop before entering the intersection.

Simple: Make a complete stop. Then enter the intersection.

It is important to speak clearly and in a normal tone of voice. Speaking loudly does not facilitate comprehension. It creates anxiety in the listeners which in turn decreases comprehension.

Use imperatives. They help to make sentences easier to understand. Also, stick to basic verb tenses. Usually, LEP students understand present and past tenses, both simple (I study.) and progressive (I am studying.).

Don't use perfect tenses (have, has, had + participle) or make conditional sentences with such words as if, would and might.

Decide ahead of time which words and phrases you will use in giving general directions. Memorize those phrases and use them all the time. Keep your directions as short as possible. For example, don't say "Everybody take your seat" when the students have learned "Sit down".

Main Concept and Essential Supporting Details

Before introducing any lesson, you should decide on the general and specific objectives of the lesson. You should be prepared with appropriate written material. Remember that visuals or real objects (possibly pictures or models) will help clarify ideas.

Demonstrate procedures and allow students to experiment when possible.

Keep groups small. Let students work on projects together. Use tutors if they are available for individualizing additional classroom activities.

Essential Vocabulary

Every subject matter has its own specialized content vocabulary.

That vocabulary cannot be simplified; it must be explained and learned.

In oral work, it can be defined by gesturing, and by using realia and other visuals.

In written work, it can be defined within parentheses. Or, use the vocabulary item in a sentence which makes the meaning clear.

In addition, vocabulary items can be defined at the ends of chapters and/or in a glossary at the end of the text.

First, determine which words and phrases are necessary for talking and/or writing about the subject being taught.

When explaining new vocabulary, use only the words that are essential and which are used in the text. Don't "word dribble." Too many words confuse and overburden the students' limited language capacity.

1. Identify the new content vocabulary.
2. Repeat the item at least two times.
3. Have the students repeat the item.
4. Don't be afraid of memory work. Sometimes students are comfortable with memorizing key ideas and vocabulary in phrases and sentences.

For example,

RED means STOP, danger.

YELLOW means WARNING, yield.

GREEN means GO, safe.

Don't talk about the weather, closing the door, or someone moving his seat while you are teaching the lesson. This confuses LEP students. Often, they don't know which words are the "lesson" words, phrases, and sentences and which are the "dribble."

Written Materials

Written materials should be organized in small, sequential steps. Use outline style rather than long paragraphs. Isolate important points. Students are intimidated by large, dense groups of words.

Be sure to place appropriate pictures and diagrams next to the sections of the text that you want to clarify.

Again, sentences should be short and simple. Write two short, simple sentences rather than one long, complex sentence. Here is an example.

Complex: Hydroplaning, which can cause skidding, takes place when you are driving on wet pavement.

Simple: Hydroplaning can cause skidding.
It happens when you are driving on wet pavement.

Evaluation of Students' Achievement

1. Test only the specific skill or concept that was taught.
2. Don't test language, per se. Make sure students understand the meaning of words you have taught, not their correct usage in sentences.
3. Allow for non-verbal demonstrations for evaluation purposes (testing).
A student can demonstrate that he understands concepts by
 - . identifying symbols and words, written or spoken,
 - . recognizing spatial, chronological, numerical and alphabetical order,
 - . performing operations.
4. Use fill-in-the-blank or true/false formats. Use exercise items from the text along with items of your own for testing. Make sure that test directions are simple and clear.

5. Expect students to give back only the information that was taught and to perform only the procedures that were demonstrated. Synthesizing, transferring concepts to new situations, and analyzing are difficult. Don't expect students to put ideas into "their own words" or to draw their own conclusions in the new language, English.
6. All dittos must be very neat and legible. Make sure students don't have to decipher a ditto before answering questions. Blurred letters and words are very misleading and confusing.
7. Draw permanent, horizontal lines three inches apart on the blackboard. Make sure you write on them. Your blackboard performance will be an example of how you expect your students' papers to look.
8. Give Pass/Fail grades rather than the traditional A-F.

THESE ARE THE SENTENCE PATTERNS, VERB FORMS, STRUCTURE WORDS AND ENDINGS THAT WE AT SENN USE IN WRITING STUDY MATERIALS FOR LEP STUDENTS.

I. The Sentence

- A. The sentence is the basic unit.
- B. Sentences are divided into slots. For purposes of development, transformation, and substitution, four slots are recognized.
 1. Subject
 2. Verb
 3. Predication (everything that completes the predicate except adverbs)
 4. Adverb

EXAMPLES:

SLOTS [1] SUBJECT		[2] VERB	[3] PREDICATION			[4] ADVERB
			I.O.	D.O. PRED N or ADJ	N/ADJ/ OBJ OF PREP	
The foreman		gave	the workers	instructions	---	yesterday.
The packages		were mailed	---	---	---	from Miami.
The living room		was	---	yellow.	---	---
The janitor		painted	---	our living room	blue	last month
Mr. Black		is	---	the principal	---	of the school.
The people		elected	---	Ronald Reagan	president	in 1981.
We		want to have	---	a picnic	---	in Lincoln Park.
Mei Ling		makes	---	lots of clothes	for her family	every year.

II. Sentence Structures

- A. Simple independent clauses are preferred.

Chronological order is time order.
Write the correct names on the continents.

- B. Short compound sentences are permitted.

Mei is the teacher and John is the student.

- C. Sentences with noun clauses as direct objects are fairly easy to understand.

Children think that birthdays are fun.

- D. Sentences with adverbial clauses can be written two ways.

1. In normal order, the independent clause comes first.

You turn off the electricity before you replace the fuse.

2. However, the dependent clauses is often written first.

Before you replace the fuse, you turn off the electricity.

- E. Sentences with "if" clauses can often be rewritten. Try.
Sometimes "when" can be used for "if".

Try to use present tense when using "if".

The circuit has electricity if the test lamp lights up.
If the test lamp lights up, the circuit has electricity.

You can use present tense in the "if" clause and future tense in the independent clause.

If it doesn't rain, I'll wear my new shoes.
I'll wear my new shoes if it doesn't rain.

Do not use "if" with contrary-to-fact ideas.
(These look like past tense to LEP students.)

If I had a million dollars, I'd go to France.

F. Sentences with adjective clauses like this are OK ("that" is the subject of the verb that follows):

SUBJECT	VERB	PRED. N. D.O.	that	VERB	PRED. N. D.O.
This	is	the sink	that	leaks.	
This	is	the book	that	gives	the correct information.

Adjective clauses like the following are not used
("that" is the D.O. of the verb that follows):

SUBJECT	VERB	PRED. N.	D.O.	SUBJECT	VERB
This	is	the sink	that	the plumber	repaired. (that sink)
He	read	the book	that	his brother	recommended. (that boo

III. Sentence Types

A. Imperative

Use imperatives whenever possible. They are syntactically simple and easily understood by LEP students.

Don't come to work late.
Get a social security card.

B. Declarative

Declarative sentences should be as short and simple as possible.
Break long, complex sentences into short, simple ones.
Keep sentence subjects short.

Bad: Any student using the library during a free period must sign the clipboard at the circulation desk near the front door, and indicate both division number and reason for free time.

Good: There is a clipboard at the circulation desk.
Write your name and division on it.
Also write the reason you are free.

C. Interrogative

1. Interrogative sentences should be short and simple.
2. Question formation enables students to manipulate the slots (syntactic units) and understand and produce declarative sentences.

See examples on next page.

1. SUBJECT

2. VERB

3. PREDICATION

4. ADVERB

Who
The students

What do
did + paint
painted What What color
the room blue

When
yesterday.

Who

painted

the room

blue

yesterday?

(YES question)

Did

the students

paint _

the room

blue

yesterday?

(NO question)

Did

the students

paint _

the room

pink

yesterday?

(OR question)

Did

the students

paint _

the room

blue or
pink

yesterday?

What

did

the students

do

yesterday?

What

did

the students

paint _

blue

yesterday?

What color

did

the students

paint _

the room

yesterday?

When

did

the students

paint _

the room

blue?

The students

painted

the room

blue

yesterday, didn't they?

The students

didn't

paint

the room

pink

yesterday, did they?

IV. Sentence Voice

A. Active

Use the active voice whenever possible. Students are more familiar with it.

B. Passive

Because of the reverse order of subject and direct object, passive voice is often more difficult than active voice for students to understand. However, there are some passive voice sentences that seem almost "kernels", i.e. base sentences. (Usually, no agent is expressed.)

The following sentence pattern is widely used in vocational education and "how to" materials. (It can often be replaced by an imperative sentence.)

The paint is left to dry overnight.
The glue is spread on the surface.
The pattern is pinned to the fabric.
The packages were delivered this morning.

V. Parts of Speech

A. Nouns

Nouns are singular or plural. Use both regular and irregular forms.

Use 's for possessive (usually singular). Use s for possessive (usually plural).

Nouns take these positions in a sentence:

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------------|------------------|----|--------------------|----|
| 1. Subject | <u>Mr. Brown</u> | is | the teacher | Ø. |
| 2. Pred. noun | Mr. Brown | is | <u>the teacher</u> | Ø. |
| 3. Pred. adj. | Mr. Brown | is | <u>nice</u> | Ø. |

4. Restatement

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----|-------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|----|
| a. | <u>Mr. Brown, my teacher,</u> | is | <u>nice</u> | Ø. |
| b. | <u>We</u> | elected | Mr. Brown <u>president</u> | Ø. |
| c. | <u>We</u> | painted | the livingroom <u>blue</u> | Ø. |

V. Parts of Speech (cont.)

A. Nouns (cont.)

5. Object

a. Direct object	1 He	2 wrote	3 <u>a letter</u>	4 Ø.
b. Object of the preposition	He	wrote	a letter <u>to his mother</u>	Ø.
c. Indirect object	He	wrote	<u>his mother</u> a letter	Ø.

B. Pronouns

1. Personal

a. Subject

I	we
you	
he, she, it	they

b. Object

me	us
you	
him, her, it	them

V. Parts of Speech (cont.)

B. Pronouns (cont.)

2. Possessive

mine	ours
yours	yours
his, hers, its	theirs

3. Demonstrative

this	these
that	those

4. Indefinite

one	ones
much	many
more	most
other	others

none	some	any
noone	someone	anyone
nobody	somebody	anybody
nothing	something	anything

V. Parts of Speech (cont.)

C. Noun Determiners indicate a Noun is coming.

the		every
a		each
this	these	several
that	those	
		a few (of)
my	our	a lot (of)
your		a little (of)
her, his, its	their	all, none (of)
other, another		numbers
any, some, no		<u>first</u> book, <u>second</u> book
many, much, more, enough		<u>one</u> book, <u>two</u> books

D. Adjectives describe and modify Nouns.

- Simple, in pre-noun positions
big ball, beautiful girl, good food
 - Intensified by "very"
(Do not confuse with "too"
and "so".)
very big, very beautiful, very good
 - Qualified by "too"
That dress doesn't fit. It is too big
(little) for her.
 - Comparative -er than
more than
bigger than, better than,
more beautiful than
- N. is as Adjective as N.
John is as tall as Bill.
- Superlative
the -est
the most
the biggest, the best
the most beautiful

V. Parts of Speech (cont.)

E. Verbs

For instructional purposes, verb forms are divided into three levels.

1. Level I

- a. imperative
- b. simple present
- c. present progressive
- d. past progressive
- e. "going to" + V = future
- f. auxiliary verbs

1) be

2) do

Do you know her?

(questions)

Bill doesn't have a car.

(negatives)

What are you doing?

(verb place-holder)

What does he do?

2. Level II

- a. all of the forms that are taught on Level I
- b. simple past, -ed and irregular forms
- c. auxiliary verbs (modals)

1) will

2) can

3) could (used only as the past sense of "can",
not with the conditional)

Examples: He could remember his lesson yesterday, but
he can't remember it today.

NOT: If John felt better, he could take me to the movies.

- d. Other auxiliary verb forms (which are "do" verbs)

1) want to

2) plan to

3) need to

4) like to

V. Parts of Speech (cont.)

3. Level III

- a. all of the forms that are taught on Levels I and II
- b. used to
- c. look forward to + Ving
- d. auxiliary verbs
 - 1) should (obligation)
 - 2) must
 - 3) have to
 - 4) introduction to using auxiliary verbs for the purpose of
stating a condition

example: Sergio will repair the windows if he has the right tools.

F. Infinitives

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. completing the verb | I want <u>to go</u> . |
| 2. following an adjective | It was difficult <u>to do</u> . |
| 3. following a noun | I have work <u>to do</u> . |
| 4. meaning "in order to" | He used the saw <u>to cut</u> the wood. |

V. Parts of Speech (cont.)

G. Adverbs (Simple and Comparative) go with the verb

1. Place - where?

here
there
near
far
up
down
close

2. Time - when?

now
today
tomorrow
yesterday
morning
afternoon
night
every day
every week

early
on time
late
then (later)
then (at that time)
already
yet
Wednesday, etc.
June 4, 1982, etc.

3. Manner - how? (This adverb often has the -ly suffix.)

fast	faster
slow	slower
quickly	quicker
carefully	more carefully

4. Intensifiers that accompany verbs

always
sometimes
never
often
seldom

V. Parts of Speech (cont.)

H. Prepositions position Nouns in place, time, and manner in phrasal structure.

The most common prepositions in English are:

in, on, at, to, from, for, of, with, by.

Other common prepositions are:

into, through, during, along, under, above, before, after.

At this level of English, prepositional phrases are used mostly in the predicate.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. As adverbs | We eat breakfast <u>in the cafeteria</u> .
We eat <u>before school</u> .
We eat breakfast <u>in a hurry</u> . |
| 2. As an adjective following a Noun | I gave the package to the man <u>in the raincoat</u> . |
| 3. As an adjective following a Noun in an adverb phrase | We went to Marshall Fields <u>in the Loop</u> . |
| 4. Tag Comparatives | Sew this seam <u>like the others</u> .
This fabric is <u>similar to that one</u> .
Trace the pattern the <u>same as in step 4</u> . |